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The situation in the Middle East

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Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report contains replies received from Member States in response to the Secretary-General's note verbale of 10 May 2010 concerning implementation of the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolutions 64/20, entitled "Jerusalem", and 64/21, entitled "The Syrian Golan".

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 64/20 and 64/21. In its resolution 64/20, the Assembly stressed that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of the City of Jerusalem should take into account the legitimate concerns of both the Palestinian and Israeli sides and should include internationally guaranteed provisions to ensure the freedom of religion and of conscience of its inhabitants, as well as permanent, free and unhindered access to the holy places by the people of all religions and nationalities. In its resolution 64/21, which deals with Israeli policies in the Syrian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, the Assembly demanded once more that Israel withdraw from all the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967 in implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

2. On 10 May, in order to fulfil my reporting responsibility under resolutions 64/20 and 64/21, I addressed notes verbales to the Permanent Representative of Israel and the Permanent Representatives of other Member States to the United Nations requesting them to inform me of any steps their Governments had taken or envisaged taking concerning implementation of the relevant provisions of those resolutions. As at 31 August 2010, seven replies had been received from Argentina, Cuba, Guinea, Jordan, Lebanon, Mexico and the Syrian Arab Republic. Those replies are reproduced in section II of the present report.

II. Replies received from Member States

Argentina

[Original: Spanish]

In compliance with international law and United Nations resolutions, Argentina has expressed support for the status of Jerusalem and condemned the illegal Israeli settlement policy in East Jerusalem.

Accordingly, in March 2010, the Government of Argentina deplored the announcements made by Israeli authorities concerning the continued construction of housing in East Jerusalem. Specifically, in a communiqué of 12 March 2010, subsequently repeated on 19 March 2010, it strongly condemned the notice by the Government of Israel authorizing the construction of 1,600 new dwellings in East Jerusalem. It stated that this decision to continue the construction of settlements in East Jerusalem contravened international law, was in non-compliance with resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, and obstructed the resumption of Palestine-Israeli peace negotiations. It also appealed to Israel to cease forthwith and completely the building of illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as evidence of its commitment to the accords on the Middle East peace process and in recognition of the efforts of the international community to secure a just and lasting peace.

On the occasion of the official visit by Bashar Al-Assad, President of the Syrian Arab Republic, on 2 July 2010, Argentina, both in international forums and bilaterally, affirmed the necessity of strict compliance with international law and the

relevant resolutions of the United Nations, especially resolution 497 (1981), concerning the question of the occupied Syrian Golan.

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]

Israel must comply with the provisions of Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and withdraw fully from the occupied Syrian Golan to the lines of 4 June 1967, in implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Israel must also adhere to the Madrid terms of reference, based on the principle of land for peace, which are in their entirety considered to be a primary and basic element in the negotiating process that should be adhered to, including the immediate commencement of demarcation of the 4 June 1967 line. Similarly, Israel must comply immediately and unconditionally with the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949 and must apply them to the situation of the Syrian detainees in the occupied Syrian Golan.

Cuba reiterates its strong condemnation of the brutal Israeli practices in the prisons established during the occupation and expresses serious concern at the inhuman conditions of the Syrian detainees in the occupied Syrian Golan, which have led to the deterioration of their physical health and put their lives at risk in a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. Israel must also reopen the Quneitra crossing point in order to facilitate visits by Syrian citizens under Israeli occupation to their motherland, Syria.

Cuba reaffirms its unconditional support for and solidarity with the rights of the Syrian Arab Republic and its just demand for restoration of its full sovereignty over the occupied Syrian Golan on the basis of the mandate of the Arab Peace Initiative, the Madrid peace process and the principle of land for peace and in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

All measures and actions taken or to be taken by Israel, the occupying Power, in an attempt to alter the legal, physical and demographic status and institutional structure of the occupied Syrian Golan, such as the illegal decision of 14 December 1981, as well as the measures taken by Israel in order to apply its jurisdiction and administration there, are null and void and have no legal effect.

In that connection, we reaffirm that all these measures and actions, including the illegal construction and expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan since 1967, constitute both a flagrant violation of international law, international conventions and the Charter and decisions of the United Nations, including in particular Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949, and a challenge to the will of the international community.

We demand that there be an end to the occupation of all the Arab territories that have been occupied by Israel since 1967 and remain under its occupation — namely the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan — and that the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital be permitted; we also demand a just

resolution of the question of the refugees on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III), adopted on 11 December 1948.

Cuba will continue to support and contribute in all possible ways to the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East based on all the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the road map.

We reaffirm that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East can only be achieved with the unconditional return of the Arab territories occupied in 1967, including the Syrian Golan and the Sheba'a Farms. Restoration of the inalienable right of the long-suffering Palestinian people to self-determination, the return of refugees and the establishment of an independent State with its capital in East Jerusalem, as has been demanded in successive United Nations resolutions, are essential to the achievement of peace.

Cuba considers that although Israel officially proposes the resumption of talks and contacts in order to achieve peace, these are intended only to gain time, to prolong the current misery of the occupied territories and to continue the financial sanctions that affect the life of the Palestinians in the occupied territories; this shows the Israeli leaders' lack of true will to pave the way for the peace that is the aspiration of the peoples of the region, including the Israeli people, and of the international community.

In the context of the current serious situation in the Middle East, Cuba reaffirms the permanent responsibility of the United Nations, including the Security Council, with regard to the peace and security of the region, including resolution of the question of Palestine.

Guinea

[Original: French]

The Government of the Republic of Guinea, in accordance with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international law; wishing to honour its international commitments; respectful of the rules, aims and principles that govern the subregional, regional and international organizations and institutions of which it is a member; and reaffirming its belief in the principles of equality, State sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs, calls emphatically for the immediate and unconditional return of the Syrian Golan occupied by Israel.

The Republic of Guinea reaffirms its support for and solidarity with the legitimate demands and rights of Syria to restore its full sovereignty over the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, in accordance with the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

It further reaffirms that all the measures which Israel, the occupying Power, has taken to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan are null and void and without legal effect, as confirmed by the Security Council in resolution 497 (1981). It therefore requests Israel to rescind any decision made in that connection, particularly that of 14 December 1981.

The Republic of Guinea considers that the continued occupation of the Syrian Golan and its de facto annexation constitute a stumbling block to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region. It calls upon Israel to respect all its commitments and to withdraw from all the occupied Syrian Golan.

It appeals urgently to all the parties concerned, the co-sponsors of the peace process and the international community to do everything necessary to ensure the resumption and success of the peace process by implementing the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The Republic of Guinea reiterates its unfailing commitment to spare no effort to help bring about a new era of peace, security and stability in the Syrian Golan and in the region.

Jordan

[Original: English]

The Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is deeply concerned at the unilateral Israeli measures that adversely affect the integrity, authenticity and cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls and that constitute a breach of international humanitarian law, including specific Israeli obligations under the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict of 1954, to which both Israel and Jordan are parties, and which remains applicable at all times to all parties, in relation to the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Haram Al-Sharif, which are part of the Jordanian cultural property occupied in 1967 that includes the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls. Furthermore, such intrusive Israeli measures and excavations in and around the holy sites in Jerusalem, which are also under the custodianship of Jordan, are totally unacceptable and contradict the letter and spirit of article 9 of the Treaty of Peace between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the State of Israel, which is registered at the United Nations.

Israel, as the occupying Power in the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls, continues through acts and omissions to violate international humanitarian law and relevant United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) conventions by allowing illegal and intrusive excavations that adversely affect the integrity, authenticity and culture of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls and jeopardize the structure and foundations of the adjacent Al-Haram Al-Sharif compound area, in complete disregard of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its Protocols and the 1972 World Heritage Convention. Moreover, the construction of the Israeli separation wall in and around occupied East Jerusalem, beside the construction of the tramway along the walls of the old city, adversely affects the integrity, authenticity, cultural heritage and historical landscape of occupied East Jerusalem, including the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls.

The present report aims to highlight the activities and projects of the Government of Jordan in the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls. Furthermore, based on the observations of the Jordanian Ministry of Awqaf, the report presents information and evidence on continuous unilateral Israeli acts in the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls, which adversely affect and jeopardize the integrity, authenticity and cultural heritage of the city.

In this regard, the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan wishes to underscore the indispensability of the continued guidance and direction of the United Nations and its agencies in bringing about the fulfilment of the obligations of all parties towards the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls, which are of paramount importance to Islam, Christianity and Judaism.

The Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan wishes to make evident Israel's continued non-cooperation and its denial of Jordanian requests for the entry of its national experts, with their equipment, to take the appropriate measurements of the Mughrabi Ascent Site, and to enable the Jordanian concept design as evaluated by UNESCO in accordance with UNESCO decision 181 EX/5 Add.4. In this regard, it is deeply regretful that, on 29 July 2009, Israeli authorities repeatedly denied access to Jordanian experts with their equipment to the site, despite attempted coordination from Jordanian authorities with their Israeli counterparts. In this regard, the Government of Jordan views the involvement of the United Nations and UNESCO as crucial in maintaining the authenticity and integrity of the Old City of Jerusalem, including the Mughrabi Ascent.

The duty of Israel to cooperate with Jordanian authorities regarding the Mughrabi Ascent issue is imperative under international humanitarian law, including the relevant provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict of 1954, both recalled in World Heritage Committee decision 33 COM 7A.18 and UNESCO Executive Board decision 182 EX/5 Add.4. According to that duty, Israeli authorities ought to allow Jordanian experts access to the Mughrabi Ascent site to enable them to take the required measurements to finalize the Jordanian design, which is currently a concept design. Regretfully, such cooperation, which is necessary to continue the process towards a final design that would be submitted to the World Heritage Centre, is still being consistently and regretfully denied by Israeli authorities to their Jordanian counterparts, as communicated by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Jordanian Chargé d'affaires in Israel on 17 December 2009.

While Jordanian and Waqf authorities are the authorities entrusted under international humanitarian law, including the 1954 Hague Convention, with the right and duty to maintain and preserve the Mughrabi site with the required cooperation of Israel, the Government of Jordan views the involvement of the United Nations and UNESCO as crucial to the maintenance of the authenticity, integrity and cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem, including the Mughrabi Ascent. It is precisely against this background, and the fact that the World Heritage Committee decided, in its decision 33 COM 7A.18, to continue with the reinforced monitoring mechanism, that the Jordanian Government is requesting that the World Heritage Centre and UNESCO organize and facilitate the necessary technical follow-up meeting at the Mughrabi site with all concerned parties for additional exchanges of information.

In addition, the Government of Jordan reiterates that paragraph 9 of its Executive Board decision 182 EX/5 Add.4 clearly "recognized the existence of deep concerns regarding the decision taken by the Jerusalem District Planning and Construction Commission on the town planning scheme for the Mughrabi Ascent"; and, in paragraph 10, requested that: "despite the decision mentioned in paragraph 9, the process for the design of the Mughrabi Ascent be inclusive of all parties concerned, in accordance with the spirit and content of previous World Heritage

Committee decisions"; as such, the non-inclusion of Jordan in the UNESCO design process is effectively deemed as a unilateral measure according to paragraphs 9, 10 and 11 of the above-mentioned decision since the UNESCO Executive Board, in paragraph 11, subsequently reaffirmed "in this regard, that no measures, unilateral or otherwise, should be taken which will adversely affect the authenticity and integrity of the site, in accordance with the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of 1972 and, as necessary, the relevant provisions on the protection of cultural heritage of the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict of 1954".

As such, the Government of Jordan unequivocally underscores its right to send its experts to the site with measuring equipment and reiterates its refusal of all unilateral actions by Israel in this regard which do not comply with article 5 (2) of the Hague convention. The occupying Power is allowed, only when the competent national authorities are unable to take such measures, and in close cooperation with such national authorities, to take the most necessary measures of preservation. As a concerned party, and the competent and able national authority, Jordan shall not accept any process that falls short of enabling it to fulfil its rights to safeguard the Mughrabi Site and complete its final design for the Ascent.

It is also a matter of concern that Israeli officials rejected the Jerusalem court's proposal to shelve the controversial plan for the Mughrabi Ascent after the judge had accepted that the plaza's expansion would violate the "status quo" arrangement. It is rather troubling to note that Israeli officials rejected the compromise presented to the court, that the ramp be reinstated or, at the very least, that the bridge follow the exact route of the ramp. The Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan fears that such a rejection of the court's compromise will pave the way for unilateral measures at the site, which may well prove provocatory, bearing in mind past violent reactions to such measures in this sensitive area of Jerusalem.

It is also a matter of deep concern for the Government of Jordan that intrusive Israeli excavations in the town of Silwan have caused a collapse and an avalanche on 3 January 2010 in the main street of Silwan, linking the town centre and the Haram Al-Sharif Compound, and again a larger collapse on 18 January 2010 in Wadi Hilwa Street, where a crater measuring 3 metres in length and 4 metres in width was created in the centre of the main street, leading to the structural collapse in the street and damage to the surrounding historic buildings. It is a matter of deep concern that Israeli excavations in Silwan and the digging tunnels towards Al-Aqsa Mosque have caused the collapse of the ground in the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East Girls School.

Furthermore, it is a matter of grave concern for the Government of Jordan that Israeli authorities are not acting with due diligence in preventing excavations and the digging of a tunnel stretching down the main street of Silwan towards the walls of Al-Aqsa Mosque in the Old City of Jerusalem, in addition to not preventing the illegal transport of large quantities of gravel and stones from excavation sites in Silwan to unknown destinations. It is the view of the Government of Jordan that such excavations compromise and adversely affect the integrity, safety, authenticity and cultural heritage of the surrounding buildings in Silwan and jeopardize the structure of the Walls of the Old City of Jerusalem and the foundations of the adjacent Al-Haram Al-Sharif compound area.

The Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan regards the above-mentioned Silwan excavations and related collapses as very serious and intrusive, since many of the Silwan homes and roads are already fragile and under the threat of collapse. Furthermore, the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is deeply concerned to realize that such Israeli works are still under way despite calls upon Israel to intervene positively and promptly to terminate any such works in Silwan.

Intrusive Israeli excavations in the Ummayad palaces area are ongoing and Israeli allegations that "works being carried out do not exceed removing accumulated debris and dust in order to maintain the aesthetics of the surrounding area", are unacceptable and incompatible with the reports of the Jordanian Awqaf Authorities and the Reconstruction Committee of Al-Aqsa Mosque. The observations of the Jordanian Awqaf reveal that new Israeli excavations resumed on 10 March 2010 in "Al-khatuniya" land, near the paved road at the south corner of the area and 10 to 12 metres from the main road. Furthermore, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem News Bulletin on 22 February 2010 announced that "archaeological excavations carried out by the university, in cooperation with the Israel Antiquities Authority, the Israel Nature and Parks Authority and the Company for the Development of East Jerusalem, have allegedly revealed a section of an ancient city wall of Jerusalem from the tenth century BCE, 70 metres long and 6 metres high, which is located between Silwan and the southern wall of Al-Aqsa Mosque".

Likewise, Israeli occupation authorities removed and transferred important archaeological layers of Islamic Waqf land adjacent to Al-Aqsa Mosque, including the removal of a large stone of great archaeological importance at Haram Al-Sharif compound in occupied East Jerusalem, which was moved in front of the Israeli Knesset in West Jerusalem.

It is to be regretted that the Israeli occupation authorities continue to impede the work of the technical cadres of the Jordanian Al-Aqsa Reconstruction Committee and are preventing the transport of the necessary materials from Jordan for repair work. The Committee was also prevented from installing the crescent of the Dome of the Rock and from bringing in tiles for the restoration of the Dome itself.

Israeli occupation authorities are carrying out excavation work in various places in the Old City of Jerusalem and surrounding Al-Aqsa and Al-Buraq Plaza in different directions, contrary to World Heritage Committee decision 33 COM 7A.18. The Jordanian Awqaf Ministry requests UNESCO and the World Heritage Committee to urgently send a fact-finding mission and put pressure on Israel to halt all such excavations.

The Ministry of Awqaf of Jordan is concerned about Israeli plans to change the character of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls, contrary to World Heritage Committee decision 33 COM 7A.18.

Israeli occupation authorities carried out excavations on Al-Wad Street inside the Old City of Jerusalem and used cast concrete walls and columns, and construction was carried out to build a synagogue above this location. They seized the surrounding Waqf lands near Hamam Al-Ein and Hamam Al-Shifa, which UNESCO has previously renovated.

Israeli occupation authorities are also implementing a railway project near the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem that will adversely affect the integrity, authenticity and cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls because of the vibrations that would arise from the movement of the train on the railroad near Damascus Gate and Jaffa Gate, which would endanger the foundations of the fragile Old City Wall. Such work carried out by Israeli authorities seeks to adversely affect the integrity, authenticity and cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls.

Israeli occupation authorities confiscated the building of Al-Tankaziah Mamluk School in the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls and are using it for stationing police and border guards, and they have continuously prevented the Jordan Ministry of Awqaf from this building, contrary to international humanitarian law, the 1954 Hague Convention and the 1972 World Heritage Convention.

Israeli occupation authorities are currently carrying out intrusive excavations in the western side of Buraq Plaza and under Al Awqaf and buildings nearby. The residents were horrified to see drilling tools penetrate the walls of their homes.

Israeli occupation authorities are undertaking excavations nearby the western tunnel surrounding Al-Buraq Plaza, compromising historic and cultural heritage buildings such as Almanjaqiah School, Al-Umariyyah School and Al-Jawhariah School.

Israeli occupation authorities are changing the traditional geographical names of traditional and historical sites, contrary to international laws and norms.

Israeli occupation authorities targeted Al-Khanqah Al-Salahiya and the western wall of the Church of the Resurrection and seized the archaeological fence.

Israeli occupation authorities are prohibiting the Islamic Waqf authorities from lighting Al-Haram Al-Sharif.

Israeli occupation authorities are preventing Arab Christians from entering the Al-Aqsa Mosque for visits and seeing its historical and cultural features, and this contributes to the spread of armed manifestations within the Haram Al-Sharif.

The Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan urges the United Nations to demand that the Israeli authorities refrain from such unilateral actions without delay and prevent any acts or omissions that adversely affect the integrity, authenticity and cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls, a site listed by Jordan in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1981 and in the List of World Heritage Sites in Danger in 1982. These acts constitute a breach of international law, including specific obligations under the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict of 1954, which both Israel and Jordan are parties to, and which remains applicable at all times. The Government of Jordan further calls upon UNESCO, including the World Heritage Committee, to carry out its mandate in protecting the integrity, authenticity and cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls, including the Al-Haram Al-Sharif compound, which is of paramount religious importance to nearly 2 billion Muslims around the world.

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]

Lebanon is committed to General Assembly resolution 64/20 with regard to the refusal, in accordance with United Nations principles and international law, to recognize any imposition by the Israeli occupying authorities of its laws, jurisdiction and administration. The aforementioned principles and international law assert the obligation to respect national sovereignty.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]

Mexico considers that the expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories and the occupied Syrian Golan does not help to establish a climate conducive to the resumption of peace talks by the parties and has therefore called on the Government of Israel to revoke such measures and to avoid such actions, which are contrary to international law and a serious impediment to the peace process in the region.

Syrian Arab Republic

[Original: Arabic]

Over the years since 1967, when Israel occupied the Syrian Golan, the international community has consistently maintained its forceful rejection of that occupation, demanding that occupying Israeli forces should be withdrawn from all of the Syrian Golan. General Assembly resolution 64/21 affirms the concern felt by the international community at the failure of Israel to comply with the relevant resolutions and its continued occupation of the Syrian Golan, contrary to Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. In resolution 64/21, the Assembly declares that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan is null and void and has no validity whatsoever, as confirmed by the Security Council in its resolution 497 (1981), and calls upon Israel to rescind it.

After 43 years of that despotic occupation and notwithstanding the resolutions of international legitimacy, the demands for that occupation to end that have been made at international gatherings by most countries of the world and condemnation of the daily Israeli tyrannical practices and blatant violations of all international conventions and customs, Israel remains indifferent to all those demands and international resolutions, and no obstacles are placed in the path of its expansionist ambitions.

The Syrian Arab Republic has affirmed its intense desire to continue to work and cooperate with the United Nations with a view to ending that occupation. On the basis of that understanding, the Syrian Arab Republic states *in no uncertain terms* that United Nations resolutions continue to be the basic terms of reference for the just and comprehensive resolution of the problems in the Middle East. Given that fixed principle of Syrian policy, President Bashar Al-Assad has declared on more than one occasion that the Syrian Arab Republic is willing to resume peace

negotiations on the same basis on which the Madrid peace process was started in 1991. The Syrian Arab Republic has also declared in all international forums its full commitment to the relevant international resolutions and has called for their implementation and, in particular, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981), and for implementation of the principle of land for peace, in order to ensure full withdrawal by Israel from all of the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic denounces the decisions made by the Israeli Government to intensify settlement in the occupied Syrian Golan and, in particular, the decision of the Golan Regional Council, endorsed by the Government of the occupation, to build a new tourist settlement village near the Israeli settlement of Ani'am. It also condemns the cooperation between the Regional Council and the management of the extremist religious settlement of Yonatan, aimed at attracting thousands of settlers, and the focus by Israeli tourism companies on building settlements in the guise of "tourist villages" in the Batihah region in the far south of the occupied Golan and, in particular, in the region known as Tall al-Sayyadin on the eastern shore of Lake Tiberias. It also condemns the tourist excursions to those villages that are organized by international Jewish organizations and the infrastructure development and settlement expansion by the occupation authorities in the settlements of, inter alia, Eliad, Ein Zivan, Natur, Khasfin, Hadnes and Nof. Such Israeli actions make it clear that Israel's true intention is to reject peace, paying no heed to Security Council or General Assembly resolutions, the most recent of which was Assembly resolution 64/93, which reiterated the demand for the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic condemns the distribution by the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations in New York of products from the occupied Syrian Golan and stresses that such behaviour constitutes a flagrant violation of Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and General Assembly resolution 64/185, entitled "Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources".

The Syrian Arab Republic rejects the approval on 9 December 2009 by the Israeli Knesset of the first reading of a motion mandating a referendum on any agreement that would lead to the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Syrian Golan and East Jerusalem and requiring the support of more than 80 per cent of Israelis for such withdrawal. That motion represents a violation of, and shows contempt for, international law, which stipulates that territory may not be acquired by force. It is also incompatible with Security Council resolution 497 (1981).

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms the request it has made to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President of the General Assembly, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the President of the Human Rights Council and the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross to bring pressure on Israel to ensure that the Syrian prisoners detained in its jails are kept in more humane health conditions. It also expresses its rejection of the sham trial by the Israeli occupation authorities of the Syrian citizen Yusuf Shams, who was sentenced by the Israeli authorities to five years in prison, and of the Syrian journalist Ata Farahat, who was sentenced to three years for his free exercise of patriotic journalism.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic also underlines its request to the above-mentioned international figures to bring pressure to bear on Israel to rescind its decision barring visits by citizens from the occupied Syrian Golan to their homeland, the Syrian Arab Republic, through the Qunaitra crossing, taking into consideration the material, mental and physical suffering that is caused to Syrian citizens by that tyrannical Israeli practice, which contravenes the Geneva Conventions and all international humanitarian instruments and norms. It stresses that Israeli practices in the occupied Syrian Golan exceed all legal and moral bounds, the most recent example being the imposition by the Israeli occupation authorities of two years' house arrest on a two-year-old child, Fahid Lu'ay Shuqeir, on the pretext that he was born outside Israel, when his parents were studying in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic emphasizes the need to take measures to ensure implementation of relevant international resolutions without bias or selectivity, and to invoke the Geneva Conventions in order to bring pressure to bear on Israel, the occupying Power, to comply with the wishes of the international community in order to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Similarly, the Syrian Arab Republic emphasizes its support for General Assembly resolution 64/20, entitled "Jerusalem", and calls upon the international community to bring pressure to bear on Israel to end its occupation of the Arab territories that it has occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and comply with Security Council resolution 478 (1980), in which the Council decided not to recognize the "basic law" on Jerusalem that was enacted by Israel and affirmed that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the city of Jerusalem was illegitimate and therefore null and void and without any validity whatsoever.